

network

HUMANITIES

Featured in This Issue

1 Teens behind the cameras focus on their lives in Paso Robles and Mexico.

3 Kids at urban Galileo Academy learn Mandarin by writing about their high school experiences.

6 Thousands of people participate in California Stories Uncovered.



WITH OUR OWN EYES

TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH INDIGENOUS ROOTS USE CAMERAS TO ILLUMINATE THEIR LIVES IN PASO ROBLES AND MEXICO

Editor's note: The following article describes one of five youth photography projects funded by the Council as part of the California Stories Uncovered campaign. The other projects, in West Hollywood, Santa Ana, Riverside and San Francisco, will be featured in future issues. For more information, visit www.californiastories.org.

They're people from an ancient culture from a small town in Michoacan, Mexico, called San Juan Nuevo Parangaricutiro. Today they live in Paso Robles, in a thriving community of 150 families in the Oak Park housing complex and surrounding areas. Descendants of P'urepecha people who have lived in Michoacan for thousands of years, they have one foot in California and the other squarely in San Juan Nuevo, where they typically go every year, usually for weeks at a time to celebrate Christmas.

Few people in Paso Robles know about the existence of the San Juan community. Paso Robles County educator and social worker Pedro Arroyo first learned of it from young boys in his classes. "I kept meeting kids who bragged about being from San Juan and telling me I had to see it. Then one

continued on page 4

A young Curpita dancer in San Juan Nuevo participates in a dancing tradition that predates the arrival of Europeans to Mexico. Photo/Mariano Aguilar



A check point on the Mexican federal highway leading to Michoacan. Photo/Jasmin Landin

CALIFORNIA STORIES UNCOVERED EVENTS BLANKET STATE IN APRIL

In almost 400 events occurring simultaneously on successive days in April, thousands of people around the state explored what it means to be Californian in the 21st century. It was all part of California Stories Uncovered, CCH's month-long story-sharing campaign to get at the truth about California hidden beneath the headlines, statistics and stereotypes. Serving as

honorary chairwoman of the campaign was California First Lady Maria Shriver.

Events in the Uncovered campaign reached into almost every area of the state, from rural areas to the cities and suburbs, and engaged a broad range of people, from first graders to high schoolers, from young adults to seniors.

High school kids interviewed people in their communities and turned the stories into live theater. Immigrant and refugee teenagers chronicled their lives with cameras and exhibited their work to their communities. Well-known authors gave readings of their work and inspired audiences to think about their own stories. Seniors and kids came together in a poetry slam.

Middle school music students composed songs about living in California. English-language learners told their California immigration stories.

continued on page 6

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THE IMPACT OF STORIES

This edition of *Humanities Network* is filled with news of the California Stories Uncovered campaign, our attempt to give you a sense of the creativity and enthusiasm engendered by this array of humanities programs. But rather than try to provide an overview, I'd like to take a more individual and personal look at one part of the campaign.

At the June Council meeting, when board members shared stories about the projects they had attended, I was struck by how often they would comment on how moving the stories were for both the teller and the audience. For months we had worked with our partners and project directors to create occasions for sharing stories, which we have always believed to be a powerful tool. Now we were testifying to that power.

I had the pleasure of interviewing eight of the authors in California Uncovered in cities from National City to Chico. In Fresno, the writer was Francisco Jiménez. Francisco is the Fay Boyle Professor of Modern Languages at Santa Clara University and the author of two autobiographical books, *The Circuit* (1997) and *Breaking Through* (2001), which chronicle the life of his migrant family.

When I arrived at the Fresno Memorial Auditorium, I was told that Francisco was in the auditorium, talking with a family. I looked into the dark auditorium and saw him seated in the front row, next to a young boy, his mother and his grandfather. As I approached, Francisco looked up and I could see that his eyes were moist.

When he was young, about the age of the boy he now sat next to, Francisco's father had given him a Lincoln head penny minted the year his father was born and the year the Mexican Revolution had begun: 1910. Francisco began to collect old pennies and soon his collection included coins as old as 1865. One day he came home from sixth grade and discovered that his 4-year-old sister had used his collection in a gumball machine.

The young boy sitting next to Francisco lived in San Diego. He had read *The Circuit* and had sent the book to his grandfather, who lived in Fresno. When his grandfather heard that Francisco Jiménez was going to speak in Fresno, he sent his grandson and daughter plane tickets so they could attend. Dressed in a suit and tie, the young man brought with him a box, which Francisco had just opened. Inside was a collection of pennies.

Later that evening, as part of our interview, I asked Francisco if he would read a passage from the last story in *The Circuit*, the story included in the



CCH Executive Director Jim Quay

California Uncovered anthology. Francisco agreed and began to read the story of how his eighth-grade class was given the assignment of memorizing the first lines of the Declaration of Independence. Everything went smoothly until Francisco got to the last paragraph, where he is sitting in class waiting to be called on to recite the great, familiar lines: "'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal' The teacher is taking roll when there is a knock at the door. When she opened it, I could see Mr. Denevi, the principal, a man standing

behind him. The instant I saw the green uniform, I panicked. I wanted to run, but my legs would not move." Francisco's voice catches and he stops to recover himself. "Miss Ehlis and the immigration officer walked up to me. Putting her right hand on my shoulder, and looking up at the office, she said sadly, 'This is him.'" Francisco stops again. The silence in the auditorium is deep, very deep. Francisco finishes the final sentences, seated next to me on stage, but also, I believe, seated in the front seat next to an immigration officer 50 years ago as they drove down to pick up Francisco's brother at Santa Maria High School.

I know it violates every principle of cost-benefit analysis, but if the young man who gave Francisco a new penny collection had been the only member of the audience, I would have counted the Fresno event a success.

There is so much we do not know about public humanities projects and their impact. I have no way of measuring what it meant to that young man to come to Fresno and hear Francisco speak or what effect it may have on him or anyone else, just as I have no way of measuring how many members of that audience left the auditorium with a greater understanding of what it means to be an "illegal" immigrant in California. That evening in Fresno reminded me once again that the humanities cultivate empathy, that their impact is personal. If each of the thousands of people who participated in California Stories Uncovered experienced a moment like that, the campaign was a great success.

James Quay

Board Nominations Sought

The California Council for the Humanities will select at least two new Board of Directors members later this year and invites nominations from the public.

Council board members are committed to advancing the humanities in public life and are typically leaders drawn from public and academic life. Members serve three-year terms, renewable once.

The Council seeks outstanding board members from any part of the state. This year the Council particularly welcomes nominations of Native Americans and Latinos, and of people living in the following areas: the North Coast/ Mountains, San Joaquin Valley, Orange County, San Diego, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Central Coast.

To nominate an individual, please complete the short board nomination form and submit the following supporting materials:

- A brief resume from the nominee.
- A statement indicating the nominee's occupation, education areas of public service and special qualifications for membership.
- A letter of recommendation (from someone other than yourself) if you are recommending yourself, or assurance that the nominee is willing to serve if you are nominating another person.

Be sure to make the strongest case you can for the nominee. Nominations must be received in the Council's San Francisco office no later than Friday, October 14, 2005.

Please note: No nomination will be considered without the requisite supporting materials.

CCH BOARD NOMINEE BALLOT

I nominate _____ as a member of the California Council for the Humanities Board of Directors.

Address

City/State/Zip code

Nominee's professional title

Phone and e-mail

Your name

Address

City/State/Zip code

Phone and e-mail address

Please fill out and mail along with supporting materials to: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94108

Teacher Mindy Chiang serves as a cultural bridge for her students, many of whom are immigrants from China and Taiwan



Students in Mindy Chiang’s upper-level Mandarin class at Galileo High School in San Francisco. Photo courtesy of Mindy Chiang.

Dozens of teachers across the state participated in California Stories Uncovered, working with curriculum materials developed by the California Writing Project, one of the Council’s partners in the campaign. This is the story of one teacher’s project.

Teacher Mindy Chiang knows the difficulties of learning a second language. A native Mandarin speaker, she moved to California from Taiwan when she was 16 not knowing any English. “I remember not speaking for the first six months,” she said.

Chiang has brought her sensitivity about second-language learning to her job teaching Mandarin at Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, a predominantly Asian high school in San Francisco. Her awareness was particularly evident in the special writing program she developed for her upper-level students last spring using curriculum materials developed for the Council’s April campaign by the California Writing Project, a CCH partner working to improve the teaching of writing in California schools.

When Chiang learned about grants for teachers under California Stories Uncovered, she jumped at the chance to participate. She was already working with the California Writing Project on another program called Hidden History, and she thought the Writing Project’s Uncovered materials would dovetail well with what she was already doing.

Chiang’s Mandarin class was composed of 31 seniors and juniors, all either fairly new immigrants from China or Taiwan or American-born of Chinese ancestry. Through the Writing Project’s Hidden History project, her class, via a weblog, had been communicating with kids at two elementary schools in Southern California about their own or their families’ immigrant experience.

For the Uncovered project, Chiang decided to have the class focus on their experience as students at an urban high school. “The elementary school kids were already asking them what it was like to be in high school, and it was a topic my students wanted to talk about,” Chiang said.

Chiang directed the kids to draw an Asian-American timeline and do a lot of brainstorming and reading before they started to write. “I tried to get them to think about their lives and about how different choices affect them,” Chiang said.

When it came time to write, Chiang had a two-pronged approach. She instructed the kids whose first language was Chinese to write their story in Chinese and then translate it into English. The students whose first language was English did the opposite, writing first in English and then translating what they had done into Chinese. “I wanted the students to be able to express their thoughts and ideas fully, and I felt they could only do that in their first language,” Chiang said. “When they couldn’t make the translated versions of their stories sound natural, they could turn to other students who spoke that language natively to smooth things out.”

Chiang created a California Stories Uncovered website for the project on Galileo’s main site and posted her students’ stories there in Chinese and English. She also gave the students the option of recording their stories.

“One thing that caught me by surprise,” said Chiang, “is that kids wanted their stories to be heard on the website. I couldn’t post all the stories fast enough. The kids kept coming up to me saying, ‘Where’s mine?’”

Many kids from other classes visited the website, read and listened to the stories, and left comments. “I think it was a way for immigrant kids to showcase their ability to other kids at the school. Just because their English isn’t the greatest, it doesn’t mean that they don’t have anything to contribute.

“When kids in my lower level classes read the stories, they were surprised at how difficult it is for the immigrant kids to learn a second language,” Chiang said. “It gave them a perspective on their own struggles to learn Chinese.”

Chiang sees herself as a bridge between two cultures. “I know my students feel more comfortable coming to someone like me who speaks their language when they have a problem. They know that I was once in their shoes.”

Chiang reports that her students liked the Uncovered project the

GALILEO ACADEMY TEENS: WHAT THEY WROTE

Since I immigrated to America, I never forget my own country. I have been in high school for four years. When I first stepped on this new country, I had a feeling that I will have a hard time in the coming years ... I remember the first several months. I hate to go to school and go outside, even go to Chinatown. During that period of time, I had a strange feeling that everyone knows that I don’t speak English. I was afraid that someone would ask me for direction and not being able to help them.

Meaka, Galileo Academy senior

I came to America San Francisco, when I was 14 year old ... When I first came here, I didn’t have the feeling of a tourist ... I have the feeling of a very heavy heart. At that time, I wasn’t adapted to here. I was always feeling scared and helplessness, sometimes by thinking that, my eyes will be full of tears.

Natalie, Galileo Academy freshman

There is a sentence that influences me very much in my life. It goes like this, “If you cannot make a change of the environment, then just make yourself to adjust to it.” I wasn’t familiar with America when I first came here. I had to apply for high school and enrolled by myself, I went to school and went back home after school alone. That horrible period was hard for a person to face to ... Everything was strange to me. Just like such a big city wouldn’t like to admit my existence ...

Victor, Galileo Academy senior

In high school, it has given me the feel of me getting old very quickly, whereas, in middle school every minute seems like forever to pass by. Right now the feeling I am getting from high school is “time flying by — by the blink of an eye.”

Alice, Galileo Academy junior

I also learned a lot [in high school] about independence and sometimes even your friends can’t be there for you. Friends will always be friends but certain things change as we grow up. Even though you could be the best of friends for a long time but when there’s a certain situation happening things will be different. My high school experience definitely taught me how to think for myself and make my own decisions.

Michelle, Galileo Academy junior

One of the challenges of being in high school is competition. For example, in my Chinese class, there are many immigrant students who are very fluent in Chinese. Sometimes we do the same work but they do more, and compared to them, my work is less appealing.

Jason, Galileo Academy junior

I don’t think that there is really any challenge of being in a school with so many immigrant students because immigrants are people, too. They are humans just like we are but the only difference is that our English would be better than them. As for them, their Chinese or their language would be better than us because they learn more. Well, as for me I don’t sort people out by whether or not they are immigrants or not because I really don’t like to sort people out just because they are different from me. Since I have know a lot of people who are immigrants from somewhere else and I also have a lot of friends that are immigrants, but I still treat them as how I treat everyone else equally.

Christina, Galileo Academy sophomore

Second year was ... horrible. Some Chinese person had to pick a fight with some Mexicans. Days after the fight with the Mexican, I would walk around the hallways where I would see lots of Mexicans pointing their fingers at me and muttering words under their breath. I wasn’t too excited about first day of school but feared getting beaten up. I was very irresponsible this year because of dating. I thought my hopes and dreams of going to UC were slowly fading away.

Peter, Galileo Academy junior

best of all the work they did last spring. “Most kids live for tomorrow and almost never look back. This project gave them a reason to stop and think about their lives. At our school, the American-born students don’t always understand what the immigrant students are going through. I think the stories the class wrote opened their eyes.”

To read and listen to the kids’ stories in both Chinese and English, visit Chiang’s website at http://www.galileoweb.org/chiang/Ca_story.

New Executive Assistant

California native Lauren Alexander joined CCH in July as executive assistant to Executive Director Jim Quay. Formerly, she was a development associate at San Francisco’s Haight Ashbury Free Clinic.

Born in La Mesa, Calif., Alexander grew up in a small town in the Pacific Northwest and attended UC Berkeley, where she received a BA in English literature and creative writing. An accomplished artist, Alexander studied painting in Aix-en-Provence, France, and at the San Francisco Art Institute. Besides painting Alexander’s interests include film, theater, music, photography, travel and history.



With Our Own Eyes (continued from page 1)

day I saw a group of San Juan boys perform an indigenous dance at a local event, and I was impressed. After that, people began handing me samples of P’urepecha music and books about the ancient P’urepecha culture.”

When CCH announced the availability of \$30,000 in grants for photography projects with immigrant and refugee youth — part of its California Stories Uncovered campaign — Arroyo immediately knew he wanted to



Esther Aguilar Soto captured Francisco Javier and Guadalupe Aguilar as they headed to their reception after their wedding ceremony.

apply. It would be an opportunity to have the young San Juanenses document their community and chronicle their own lives, and for outsiders to find out about this almost-hidden community.

Arroyo’s nine-month project, “With Our Own Eyes/Con Nuestros Propios Ojos,” began in September 2004 with 15 young people, most of whom he recruited with the help of Cayetano Contreras and his wife, both active in the San Juan community. The project was one of five youth photography projects funded by the Council as part of its California Stories Uncovered campaign.

The young people, most of whom were teenagers or young adults born and raised in Paso Robles, met with local professional photographer Steve Miller, Arroyo and project curator Catherine Trujillo every other Thursday night in the Oak Park Recreation Center in the complex where many of the young people lived. The youths were given Canon cameras and access to an unlimited supply of Kodak black-and-white film. None had previous photography experience beyond using point-and-shoot cameras.

One of the first things Miller did was to have the young people bring in their favorite photo. That exercise was eye-opening to project participant Maria Campoverde. “Steve told us to look at the background, to pay attention to the whole frame,” the 18-year old said. “He also taught us to take pictures without posing. Before when we used to take pictures with friends, we always posed and smiled for the camera. Now we don’t say it’s time for a picture, we just take one, and it always turns out more interesting.”

Every week, Miller met individually with each young person to go over the pictures they had shot the previous week. “Miller didn’t tell the kids what to shoot because he wanted the work to belong to them,” said Arroyo. “At first, it was slow going. All the kids got blurry images. But they soon got better. And Steve told them how important it was to shoot lots of film and to focus on things that were important to them. And because we were continually giving them feedback on their work, they were always learning.”

About three months into the project, Arroyo and Trujillo began helping the young people develop autobiographies to accompany a final exhibit of their work in April. The youths first drew a life map, showing people and events important to them, and later used the map as a guide for their writing.

In addition to photographing their lives in Paso Robles, eight of the young people took their cameras to San Juan Nuevo Parangaricutiro in Mexico over the winter break. There they photographed everything from a landmark church and Posada celebrations to street scenes and family gatherings. The 1,400-mile journey to San Juan is one that most of the Paso Robles families make every year at Christmastime. For the young people, being in San Juan Nuevo means days of festivities, parties and a lot more freedom than what they’re used to at home. “When we’re in San Juan, our parents let us do whatever we want to because they know nothing bad can happen to us,” Campoverde said.

Project Director Arroyo joined the group in San Juan and kept the kids supplied with film.

For Arroyo, the time he spent in San Juan Nuevo gave him a deeper appreciation for P’urepecha culture.



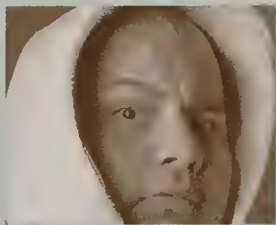
The Sanctuary of the Lord of Miracles, as viewed from the balcony of Maria Campoverde’s house in San Juan Nuevo. The landmark church is a replica of one destroyed in a 1943 volcano that buried the old town of San Juan. Photo/Maria Campoverde

“With Our Own Eyes/ Con Nuestros Propios Ojos”

Profiles of the young Paso Robles photographers



Born in San Juan Nuevo, **Mariano Aguilar** came to the United States when he was 7 years old. Now in high school, Mario lost his mother when he was in the eighth grade and said that after that he “started hanging out with the bad influences. I was another person, not the nice smart Mariano,” he said. Now back on track, Mariano wants to finish school and maybe go to college.



Seventeen-year-old **Rafael Antolino** moved to Paso Robles from San Juan Nuevo when he was in the first grade. At the time, he spoke only Spanish. “It was hard to understand my teacher and other people,” he said. “People dressed differently, and the food was different. I remember going to Burger King for the time. At first I didn’t like it, but then I got used to it.” Rafael is interested in art and graphics and wants to be a tattoo artist when he graduates from high school.



Nineteen-year-old **Esthela Campoverde** was born in San Juan Nuevo and came to the United States when she was 2. Esthela graduated from Paso Robles High School and now works and attends Cuesta Community College.



Maria Campoverde’s parents immigrated to the United States from San Juan Nuevo before Maria was born. The 18-year-old graduated from Templeton High School this year and is working at Rite Aid. She may attend Cuesta College in the fall. She has returned to San Juan with her family every year for the past four years. “Seeing all the people and traditions of San Juan makes me proud of being who I am,” she said.



Thirty-four year old **Maria Isabel Contreras** was born in Puerto Rico and moved to Paso Robles from New York when she was 15. Her husband was born and raised in San Juan Nuevo. Pregnant at 17, Maria dropped out of high school but earned her GED after her son was born. She now has three children and hopes to start a college nursing program this fall. “I will be a registered nurse three years from now,” she said.



Orquidea Contreras, 23, left Mexico for California when she was 7. She said her parents emigrated to give her and her brother better opportunities. After graduating from Templeton High School she wanted to go to college, but her parents objected. So she attended a vocational school, where she trained to be a dental assistant. She is now working as a certified nursing assistant and plans to start college in the fall to study dental hygiene.

“There wasn’t a place I went where people didn’t offer me food. People opened their homes to me and treated me with respect and dignity. By going there and seeing the place for myself I got close to a complete picture of where the kids come from. And I think the kids’ photographs give viewers a sense of that, too.”

Once back in Paso Robles, the young people continued to photograph, but they also began to focus on the upcoming exhibit in April. “We gave them their proof sheets and asked them to select their favorite photos,”



Young photographer Marian Aguilar took this shot of his family eating together in his grandfather’s kitchen in San Juan Nuevo .

Arroyo said. “We also had them choose photos related to certain common themes in their work, things like family and community life, religion and sports.” Arroyo, Miller and Trujillo then made the final selection of 43 images. Over the course of the project, each of the young photographers had used between 40 to 50 rolls of film and taken hundreds of photographs.

One of the last tasks for the young photographers was to write captions for their photos. Before they began, they looked through photography books so they could model their captions on what professional photographers had done.

On Saturday, April 23, “With Our Own Eyes/“Con Nuestros Propios Ojos” opened at the Oak Park Recreation Center. Almost 400 people showed up, including the local media. Guests were treated to P’urepecha dance performances, P’urepecha music, and plates of carnitas, rice and beans. The 43, 11-by-14-inch framed images hung on wooden panels specially built for the exhibit by project curator Trujillo.

The young photographers were apprehensive at first about their work being publicly exhibited, but their nervousness didn’t last long. “People started coming up to us to tell us what a great job we did,” remembered 18-year old Jasmin Landin, “and that made us feel good.”

The parents were particularly proud. “At first when I told my parents about the project, they wanted to know why people wanted to know about San Juan,” said Campoverde. “They didn’t understand until they saw the exhibit.”

“It may take the kids a while to realize what they have accomplished, but I think this project helped them find their voice,” said Arroyo. Maria Campoverde doesn’t hesitate when asked what the project did for her. “I see my culture as being more beautiful now,” she said. “I got to look at my community piece by piece, and it’s amazing.”

Arroyo hopes that the project will have a lasting impact on the community. To that end he has arranged for the Special Collections Department at the Robert E. Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo to archive the materials, from proof sheets to newspaper articles. What this means, he said, is that the material will be available to everyone.

For information about the project, contact contact Pedro Inzunza Arroyo at 805/783-2346 or send an e-mail to parroyo@gmail.com.

“WITH OUR OWN EYES” EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

People on the Central Coast will have two opportunities to see the photographs taken by the young photographers of San Juan. “With Our Own Eyes/Con Nuestros Propios Ojos” will be shown at the San Luis Obispo City/County Library in December and then at the Guadalupe Arts & Education Center early next year.

Dec. 1 to 31, 2005
San Luis Obispo City/County Library
995 Palm St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

January through March 2006
Guadalupe Cultural Arts & Education Center
1065 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe, CA 93434

For information, contact Pedro Inzunza Arroyo at 805/783-2346 or send an e-mail to parroyo@gmail.com.



Eighteen-year-old **Jasmin Landin Herrera**, the sister of Esmeralda Landin, grew up in Paso Robles and graduated from Templeton High School in June. Her parents were born in Mexico, her mother in San Juan Nuevo. “Ever since I can remember I have been visiting San Juan Nuevo,” she said. “When I go to San Juan I feel free, like I can do anything I want. ”



Esmeralda Landin Herrera, 16 and the sister of Jasmin Landin, was born in San Luis Obispo. Her parents grew up in San Juan Nuevo. Esmeralda made her first trip there when she was 9. She says “it was fun because I met many members of my family for the first time. The only thing I did not like was that they treated me different. Like I was not Mexican. They thought that just because I was born in the United States that I was white. They also thought I did not speak Spanish and that I had a lot of money. I think they still feel the same way about me when I go and visit.”



Sixteen-year-old **Betty Banderas Martinez** was 3 years old when she moved to California from San Juan Nuevo with her family. At first they stayed with an aunt and uncle, and Betty said that the living arrangement was difficult for her mom. “She kept asking my dad, ‘Jesus, why did you bring us here?’ She missed her little pueblo.” Now about to start her junior year at Paso Robles High School, Betty hopes to attend a university in Morelia, Michoacan, when she graduates. “One of my other dreams,” she said, “is to travel around the world. Or maybe attend UCLA.”



Rocco Marten Murillo moved to Paso Robles in 2000. His dad is from San Juan Nuevo. The 14-year-old attends Flamson Middle School and likes to play soccer and hang out with friends and his little brother, Eddie.



Esther Aguilar Soto was born in San Juan Nuevo and moved to California when she was 10. “School was difficult for me at first because I didn’t understand the teacher,” she said. “For a few days, I didn’t have a lot of friends.” Esther still misses her family and friends in Mexico, although she sees them once a year. “It’s not the same thing,” she said. Now entering her senior year in high school, Ether wants to get a job and save money after she graduates so she can travel to Spain.

UNCOVERED EVENTS (continued from page 1)

Partners help further campaign reach

Many of the events were specifically designed to engage California's young people. To broaden the reach of the campaign into California schools, the Council formed a partnership with the California Writing Project, a statewide association of 30,000 K-12 teachers working to improve the teaching of writing.

Over a period of six months in 2004, a team of 11 Writing Project teachers developed five innovative K-12 curriculum projects — lessons, instructional materials and resources — for involving students in learning and writing about their own heritage and history and that of their families and communities. Dozens of teaches in elementary, middle and high schools used the projects in their classrooms and held community events to showcase their students' work.

To help with the library component of the campaign, the Council formed a partnership with the Califa Group, a member-based service bureau for California libraries. Califa served as a liaison to the 67 California libraries that received

“I AM VERY PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED. BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THE WAY THE CAMPAIGN DID TO HEAR REAL STORIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO MIGRATED TO CALIFORNIA, HELPS BREAK DOWN STEREOTYPES AND ENGENDERS FURTHER UNDERSTANDING.”

grants to develop California Stories Uncovered programs.

Another partner, New California Media, an association of more than 700 print, broadcast and online ethnic media organizations, developed a statewide pilot “letters home” contest. The contest, which named 12 winners in late March, drew more than 200 letters written about life in California to friends and relatives in places as far afield as Guatemala, China and the Philippines.

And Heyday Books, an independent publisher, collaborated with the Council on a new anthology of California writing titled *California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century*. The new book, filled with some of the most compelling writing on California today, was a key feature in many library discussion programs, and nine authors from the anthology appeared in conversation with Council Executive Director Jim Quay at author events around the state,

The anthology, now available at local bookstores and online, features the work of such established writers as John Steinbeck, Maxine Hong Kingston and Joan Didion as well as new voices that reveal California in all its complexity.

“We want to thank everyone who made our Uncovered program such a success, from the scores of librarians and teachers who gave unstintingly of their time and developed such outstanding programs, to the authors and letter writers who generously shared their perspectives on California, to our dedicated partners who were such a pleasure to work with,” Quay said. “I am very proud of what we have accomplished. Bringing people together the way the campaign did to hear real stories, particularly those of young people and those who migrated to California, helps break down stereotypes and engenders further understanding.”

A focal point for information about the campaign was the Council's website. The website featured a calendar developed by the Council to allow site visitors to easily locate events in their area. It also provided a resource toolbox containing a wealth of materials for organizations holding programs and events.

Going forward with California Stories

The Uncovered campaign was the second major statewide project under the Council's California Stories initiative. The 2002 inaugural campaign of California Stories, Reading The Grapes of Wrath, engaged thousands of Californians in reading John Steinbeck's novel about California migrants and exploring its relevance to California today.

With the Uncovered campaign now over, the Council is eagerly planning for the next phase of California Stories. It, too, will create occasions for Californians to come together to share stories and discover the many facets of the California experience.

But the form the next effort will take won't be decided for months. One thing, however, remains clear: Stories will continue to be the glue that binds CCH's programs together. “Stories are of particular importance in California, where there are so many people of different backgrounds and cultures,” Quay said. “How else do people begin to trust one another and move past their differences? Stories can reach into the hearts of others and foster understanding and compassion.”



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CALIFORNIA STORIES UNCOVERED

THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

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1. Writer Chitra Divakaruni edited *California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century*, the Council's new anthology of California writing published as part of the California Stories Uncovered campaign. Indian-born Divakaruni is the author of the best-selling *Mistress of Spices* and, most recently, *Queen of Dreams*.
2. Francisco Jiménez, director of the Ethnic Studies Program at Santa Clara University and the author of two books about his migrant family, appeared in conversation with poet, professor and CCH board member Juan Felipe Herrera at Riverside's Universalist Unitarian Church as part of California Stories Uncovered. The event was organized by the Riverside Public Library. Here Jiménez takes time to talk to teens at Riverside's La Sierra High School. Photo courtesy of the Riverside Public Library
3. Seven libraries in Alameda County participated in California Stories Uncovered, holding reading and discussion groups and poetry workshops. Here the Alameda County bookmobile advertises the April campaign.
4. Fifteen-year-old Arnel Mampoya came to California from the Congo four years ago to be with his father. Arnel was one of the participants in "Eyes of New California," a youth photography project in San Francisco that was part of California Stories Uncovered. Photo/Kingmond Young
5. Livermore High School junior Robert Juane participated in a teen art expo at the Livermore Central Library as part of the Council's California Stories Uncovered campaign.
6. CCH Executive Director Jim Quay interviewed author Richard Rodriguez at a California Stories Uncovered event in San Francisco. Rodriguez is one of the authors featured in CCH's new anthology, *California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century*. Photo/Kingmond Young
7. *California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century* is a new collection of fiction and essays that probes California as it is today. A collaborative effort between the Council and Heyday Books, the anthology is available online and at local bookstores.
8. A California Stories Uncovered exhibit on Sikh history and life in California provided insight into a community often misunderstood. Here a group of Sikh boys and men spend time in prayer. Photo/Stacey J. Miller
9. Twelve Californians, from Stockton to La Jolla, writing to friends and relatives in places as far a field as Guatemala, China and the Philippines, won \$1,000 in prize money in the California Stories Uncovered "Letters Home" contest sponsored by CCH and New California Media, a membership association of 700 ethnic media organizations. Young Ha, one of the contest winners, is shown here with her husband, son and daughter at the awards ceremony at the San Francisco Public Library. Photo/Kingmond Young
10. Six Marina del Rey Middle School teachers participated in California Stories Uncovered, involving their classes in a variety of innovative writing projects based on curriculum materials developed by the California Writing Project, a Council partner in the April campaign. Students wrote poems, created oral histories and songs, and produced a readers' theater performance, all exploring California's multicultural identity. The students' written work was collected and bound into a California Stories Uncovered anthology, with cover art, pictured here, by a middle school student in one of the classes.
11. Russian-speaking teens in West Hollywood documented their little-known community as part of a California Stories Uncovered youth photography project sponsored by Venice Arts. Shown here at the opening exhibit of the teens' work are: (back row) Olga Kagan, UCLA; photographer Daniel Korochnik-Zoryn; CCH Board Vice Chair Paula Woods; Project Director and Venice Arts Executive Director Lynn Warshafsky; photographer Natalia Zotova; photographer Antonina Shcherbar; and (front row) photo mentor Irene Shotadze; photo mentor Oleg Volvik; and photo mentor and Venice Arts Creative Director Jim Hubbard. Photo/Bernard Fallon



Who We Are

The mission of the California Council for the Humanities is to foster understanding between people and encourage their engagement in community life through the public use of the humanities.

The Council is an independent, not-for-profit state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities supported through a public-private partnership that includes funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, private foundations and corporations. The Council also receives essential support from individuals.

To learn more about the Council and how you can participate in its programs, please visit us online at www.californiastories.org.

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